

POPERY

Banished,

With an Account of their Base Cheats, especially, making the *Word of GOD* of no Effect. And that their Worship, although contrair to the *Holy Scripture*, they call best.

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Rob. Midgley.

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A TRUE Character of Popery.

We do not find that God ever owned above two Religions in the World; the one of Ceremonies, the other without. The first dictated to *Moses* by God himself; which tho it consisted of several peculiar Rites, Oblations and Ceremonies, yet was their institution grounded upon Reason, being either Remembrances of their Deliverances, or Types and Significations of the great Sacrifice which was to come, insomuch that God did not require of the Jews to have any other Gods but him, but for a particular Reason.

The second Religion was that which the coequal Son of God first taught in *Judea*, and commanded his Disciples to spread over the World. A Religion plain and Simple, and, as I may say, without Welt or Guard, but so full of Truth and Sincerity, so full of vertuous precepts, all tending to make Men happy both in this and the other Life, that it may truly be said to have descended from Heaven, and to have been the untainted Doctrine of a most perfect Deity. Now as no Government can subsist without Religion; we thought our selves the most happy people in the World, when once reform'd, not only to the Protestant Religion, which is that which comes nearest to the Rules of Sacred Institution, but to the most refined Exercise of the protestant Religion, now practis'd in the World; Wherein there is neither Defect of Devotion nor redundances of Superstition, a Decency with Gravity, a Decorum avoiding the Moroseness of a Clownish Behaviour to the Sovereign of Heaven. No Superstitions assuming to its self a Sanctity above others, but a piety and charity grounded upon, and warranted by Scripture, without which all Religion is but a seeming, and no true Religion.

For this Reason it was, that the Author of this ensuing paper, a person, of no less piety and Learning than Sharpness of Wit and Soundness of Judgment, wrote with such an Abhorrence as he does of the popish Religion, if it may deserve to be call'd a Religion, as the Gentleman well observes; and that he

laboured to set it forth in its proper Colours, as if he had intended it as his last Legacy to this Nation, to shew how ruinous it would be to us, should we be again compell'd to imbrace it; and with the Dog be constrained to return to our former Vomit: And as it were Prophecically to let us understand what a Deliverance G O D has been pleased to bless us withal; in so largely freeing the Kingdom from that Inundation of *Antichristian* Pomp and Vanity, and Cheats of *Romish Superstition*, which was about to have overwhelmed it. 'Tis true, the Touches are bold; but it is a Description to the Life: And bold Strokes in Painting are many times more grateful to the Eye and Master-like, than the smooth Touches of an effeminate Pencil. For which Reason it was thought expedient to abstract these few Pages from the rest of the Treatise, and to hang them up in the Face of the Nation, as the most lively Picture of the Sensuality, Vanity and Treachery, of the *Romish Profession*. The Words themselves are these. In short, says he, there is nothing comes nearer in Government to the Divine Perfection, than where the Monarch, as with us, enjoys a Capacity of doing all the Good imaginable to Mankind, under disabilities to all that is evil.

And as we are thus happy in the Constitution of our State, so are we yet more blessed in that of our Church; being free from that *Romish Yoke*, which so great a part of Christendom do yet draw and labour under. That Popery is such a thing as cannot, but for want of a Word to express it, be called a Religion: Nor is it to be mentioned with that Civility which is otherwise decent to be used, in speaking of the Differences of Humane Opinion about Divine Matters. Were it either open Judaism, or plain Turkery, or honest Paganism, there is yet a certain *Bona Fides* in the extravagant Belief, and Sincerity of an erroneous Profession may render it more pardonable. But this is a Compound of all the Three, an extract of whatsoever is most Ridiculous and Impious in them, incorporated with more peculiar Absurdities of its own, in which those were deficient; and all this deliberately contrived, knowingly carried on by the bold Impudence of Priests, in the Name of Christianity. The Will dom of this high Religion, and its insolent Attempts upon the

the Credulity of Mankind seems to me (though not ignorant otherwise of Times, Degrees and Methods of its Progress) principally to have consisted in their owning the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and the Rule of Faith and Manners, but in prohibiting of the same their common Use, or the Reading of them in publick Churches, but in a *Latin* Translation to the Vulgar; There being no better or more rational way to frustrate the very Design of the great Institutor of Christianity, who first planted it by the extraordinary Gift of Tongues, than to forbid the use even of the ordinary Languages. For having thus a Book, which is universally avowed to be of Divine Authority, but Sequestering it only into such Hands as were entrusted in the Cheat, they had the Opportunity to Vitiare, Suppress or Interpret to their own profit these Records by which the poor People hold their Salvation. And this necessary Point being once gained, there was thence forward nothing so monstrous to Reason, so abhorring from Morality, or so contrary to Scripture which they might not in prudence adventure on. The Idolatry (for alas it is neither better nor worse) of Adoring and Praying to Saints and Angels, of Worshipping Pictures, Images and Relicks, incredible Miracles and palpable Fables to promote that Veneration. The whole Liturgy and Worship of the Blessed Virgin. The saying of *Pater Noster's* and Creeds, to the honour of Saints, and of *Ave Mary's* too, not to her honour, but of others. The publick Service, which they can spare to God among so many Competitors, in an unknown Tongue, and intangled with such Vestments, Consecrations, Exorcisms, Whisperings, Sprinklings, Censings and Phantastical Rites, Circumcisions, and Removals, so unbecoming a Christian Office, that it represents rather the Pranks and Ceremonies of Jugglers and Conjurers, the refusal of the Cup to the Laity. The Usurpation of the Priests Intention to make any of their Sacraments effectual, wanting their Clergy from Marriage, Interdicting of Meats, Absolving of Sinners and Absolution, as with them practised. Penances, Pilgrimages, Indulgences and Excommunication.

above all their other Devices, that Transubstantial *Salacism*; whereby this glorified Body, which at the same time they allow to be in Heaven, is Sold again, and Crucified daily upon all the Altars of their Communion. For, GOD indeed may now and then do a Miracle, but a Romish Priest can, it seems work in one Moment a Thousand Impossibilities. Thus by a new and Antiscritural Belief, compiled of Terrours to the Phansie, Contradictions to Sense, and Impositions on the understanding, their Laity have turned Tenants for their Souls, and in Consequence Tributary for their Estates to a more than Omnipotent Priesthood.

I must indeed do them that Right to avow, that out of equitable Consideration, and Recompense of so faithful a Slavery, they have discharged the People from all other Services and Dependence, Infranchised them from all Duty to God or Man; in so much that their severest and more learned Divines, their Governours of Conscience, have so well instructed them in all the Arts of Circumventing their Neighbour, and of Colluding with Heaven; that were the Scholars as apt as their Teachers, there would have been long since an end of all either true Piety or common Honesty; and nothing left among them but authorized Hypocrisy, Licentiousness and Knavery; had not the natural worth of the better sort, and the good Simplicity of the Meaner, in great measure preserved them. For nothing indeed, but an extraordinary Temper and Ingenuity of Spirit, and that too assisted by a Diviner Influence, could possibly restrain those within any the Terms or Laws of Humanity, who at the same time own the Doctrine of their Casuists, or the Authority of the Pope, as it is by him claimed and exercised. He by his Indulgences delivers Souls out of the pains of the other World: So that who would refuse to be vicious here, upon so good Security. He by his Dispensation annuls Contracts betwixt Man and Man, dissolves Oaths between Princes, or betwixt them and their People, and gives Allowance in Cases which God and Nature prohibits. He, as Clerk of the Spiritual Marker, hath set a Rate upon all Crimes: The more flagitious they are and abominable, the better Commodities, and Men pay only an higher price as for greater Rareties. So that it seems as if the Commands of God had been invented merely to erect an Office for the Pope; the worse Christians Men are, the better Customers: And this *Rome* does by the same policy People its Church, as the Pagan *Rome* did the City, by opening a Sanctuary to all Malefactors. And why not, if his power be indeed of such Virtue and Extent, as is by him challenged? That he is the Ruler over Angels, Purgatory, and Hell. That his Tribunal and Gods are all one. That all that God, he can do, *clavi non errant*, and what he does is as GOD, and not as Man. That he is the Universal Head of the Church, the sole Interpreter of Scripture, and Judge of Controversie. That he is above General Councils. That his power is Absolute, and his Decrees Infalible. That he can change the very Nature of things, making what is Just, to be Unjust, and what is Vice to be Virtue. That all Laws are in the Cabinet of his Breast. That he can Dispense with the New Testament to the great Injury of the Devils. That he is still Monarch of the World, and that he can Dispose of Kingdoms and Empires as he pleases; which things being granted, that *Stile* of *Optimum, Maximum, & Supremum Nomen In Terris*, or that of *Dominus Deus noster, Papa*, was no such extraordinary stroke of Courtship, as we reckoned; But it was rather a great slowfulness in him thus treated to misgby a Prince under the simple

Title

Title of Vice Deus. The Exercise of his Dominion is in all points suitable to this his pretence. He antiquates the Precepts of Christ, as things only of good Advice, not commanded: But makes it a mortal sin, even to doubt of any part of his own Religion, and Demands, under pain of Damnation, the Subjection of all Christians to his Papal Authority: The denying of two things so Reasonable as blind Obedience to his power, and an Implicit Faith to his Doctrine, being the most unpardonable Crime under his dispensation. He has indeed of late been somewhat more retentive than formerly, as to his Faculty of disposing of Kingdoms, the thing not having succeeded well with him in some Instances; But he lays the same claim still, continues the same inclination, and though Velvet-Headed hath the more Itch to the pushing: And however in order to any occasion, he keeps himself in breath always by cursing one Prince or other upon every *Munday, Thursday*: Nor is there any, whether Prince or Nation, that Dissents from his Ultrations, but are marked out under the notion of *Hereticks* to Ruine and Destruction, whensoever he shall give the Signal. That Word of *Herefie* misapplied, hath served him for so many Ages to justify all the Executions, Assassinations, Wars, Massacres and Devastations, whereby his Faith hath been propagated; of which our Times also have not wanted Examples, and more is to be expected for the future. For by how much any thing is more false and unreasonable, it requires more cruelty to establish it: And to introduce that which is absurd, there must be somewhat done that is barbarous. But nothing of any Sect in Religion can be more recommended by all these Qualities than the Papacy. The Pagans are excusable by their natural Darkness, without Revelation. The Jews are tolerable, who see not beyond the Old Testament. *Mahomet* was so honest as to owne what he would be at, that he himself was the greatest Prophet, and that his was a Religion of the Sword. So that these were all, as I may say, of another Allegiance, and of Enemies, yet no Traytors: But the Pope avowing Christianity by profession, doth in Doctrine and practice renounce it; And presuming to be the only Catholick, does persecute those to the Death, who dare worship the Author of their Religion, instead of his pretended Vicegerent.

And yet there is nothing more evident, notwithstanding his most notorious Forgeries, and Falsification of all Writers, than that the Pope was for several Hundred Years an honest Bishop, as other Men are, and never so much as dreamed upon the seven Hills, of that Universal power, which he is now come to, Nay, was the first that opposed any such pretension. But some of them, at last, growing wiser, by feigning a counterfeit Donation of *Constantine*, and wresting another Donation from our Saviour, advanced themselves

lives to a weak, ignorant and credulous Age, to the Temporal and Spiritual Principality, that they are now landed of; *To it Patres, et sancti Patres, adhibere debemus.* Never was a Bishoprick and a Yoke of Scripture so improved by good Management. Thus, by exercising to the Quality of *Christi Pater*, the publick Function, under an invisible Prince the *Pater*, like the Mayors of the palace, hath set his Master aside, and delivered the Government over to a new Line of papal Succession. But who can, without wilfully, be ignorant what wretched Dolours, what Bribery, what Ambition there are; how long the Church is without a Head, upon every Vacancy, till among the Crew of bandying Cardinals, the Holy Ghost hath declared for a Pope of the French or Spanish Faction. It is a Succession like that of the *Egyptian Os* (the living Idol of that Country) who dying, or being made away by the Priests, there was a solemn and general Mourning, for want of a Deity, until another God came they had found out another Beast with the very same marks as the former, whom they themselves adored, and with great Jubilee, brought forth to the people to Worship. Now was that Election a grosser Reproach to Humane Reason than that it is also to Christianity. Surely it is the greatest Miracle of the Romish Church, that it should still continue, and thus in all the Time the Gates of Heaven should not prevail against it.

It is almost unconceivable, how Princes can yet suffer their power to be ridiculous, and their rule destructive to all Government. That so great a part of the Land should be alienated and condemned, as they call it, pious lies. That such millions of their people, as the Clergy, should, by remaining unmarried, either frustrate Humane Nature, if they live chaste, or, if otherwise, adulterate it. That they should be privileged from all Labour, and publick service; and exempt from the power of all Secular Jurisdiction. That they, being all bound by strict Oaths and Yows of Obedience to the Pope, should prosecute the Healer due to the Sovereign, that not only the Clergy, but the whole people, if of the Romish persuasion, should be obliged to rebel at any time upon the Pops pleasure. And yet how many of the neighbouring Princes are content, or do challenge right upon these Conditions; which being so dishonourable and dangerous, surely some great and more weighty Reason does cause them submit. Whether it be out of personal Fear, having heard perhaps of several Attempts, where the blind Obedience of *Papal Subjects* hath executed against their Princes. Or, whether aiming at a more absolute and tyrannical Government, they think it still to be the Case of *Beniface and Phocas* (an usurping Emperor, and an usurping Bishop) and that, in other words, this also is left to be managed by Conspiracy.

As far as is now apprehended, there is more of such conspiracy on the Princes side in this unhappy manner. And without pretence of interfering here, by the assistance of Religion were capable, to deliver their own life. Hence arises the Bramble, by having the first sight of the pious, all the while of his Dominion for the future, and makes his more for the present.

FINIS

